



**Federal Aviation
Administration**

FOCUSFAA

It's All About You

Issue 13 » September 27, 2005



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The Boys of Summer

Stan Jorgensen doesn't recall when he first realized his son, Ryan, could be a major league catcher, but he remembers a few plays in college that foretold something exceptional. There was the play when Ryan leapt into the air, catching the ball in his left hand, then cart-wheeling and landing glove-first on the ground before tagging out the runner coming home from third.

Then there was the time when Ryan snatched a wild pitch and—without looking—threw it 15 feet over his shoulder to the pitcher who made the tag at home plate. “I went, Jiminy Christmas,” Jorgensen recalls “I’d look and just shake my head in wonderment.”

So when Ryan made his major league baseball debut with the Florida Marlins on Aug. 8, Jorgensen considered his son's success as “icing on the cake for all the

hard work he's put in, and all the time his mom and I have put into hauling him back and forth,” to ballgames.

Jorgensen, operations manager at Houston Center, played high school and college baseball, basketball and football. It was important to him to expose his son and daughter to multiple sports believing that it kept their minds active and involved. “Then we stepped back and let them choose,” he says.

Ryan started catching when he was nine years old after realizing the catcher and pitcher are involved in every play. By age 11, he decided his future was in the game. Jorgensen, however, urged his son to concentrate on his studies and explained that

baseball is a short-term thing.

But Ryan was adamant; he was going to be a pro baseball player. Jorgensen



Ryan Jorgensen

The Boys of Summer

says, “I laughed about it, but I had to eat my words later.”

Ryan’s career took him from the seventh round of the 2000 baseball draft, through the minors, to Albuquerque, N.M. where he played for the AAA Isotopes. When he was called up for the Marlins’ game against the Colorado Rockies at Coors Field in Denver, Jorgensen hesitated about going to the game. A good friend, former FAAer Jerry Strickland, said, “Stan, you gotta go. You can’t miss this moment.” Strickland should know. About six years ago, Strickland’s son, Scott, made his pitching debut with the New York Mets at, where else? Coors Field.

Slated to start the second game of a double-header, Ryan made his debut in the first game as catcher during extra innings. In the second game, Ryan was zero for three at the plate, but that hardly seemed to matter to the Jorgensen family.

Every one of the Rockies tapped Ryan with their bat

“Every one of the Rockies tapped Ryan with their bat,” a kind of major league benediction acknowledging the rookie’s first game. “That was true professionalism right there,” Jorgensen adds.

After the game, as he came out of the locker room, a proud mom and dad shared a hug with their son. “Every kid is like this growing up, with a dream to be like the big boys. I think Ryan was still in a semi-state of excitement and shock.” And what about dad’s emotion?

“I’m a former military pilot. The first time I soloed was an exhilarating feeling. I have a similar feeling watching my son take the field. It’s a feeling of total well-being and satisfaction. [He’s] worked so hard and come so far and I’m there.” ✈

SUMMERTIME IS NO VACATION

for the people at the Houston Air Route Traffic Control Center.

Hot weather and moisture from the Gulf of Mexico combine for thunderstorms and tornadoes that play havoc with the Houston airspace. "It's typically a challenging time of year for us," says Jim D'Ambrosio, air traffic manager. Safety is always the Center's number one priority, but this year produced additional challenges: increased traffic, new equipment like URET (user request evaluation tool) and new high altitude procedures like DRVSM (domestic reduced vertical separation minimum).



Houston Center employees

In spite of these demands and the workload they placed on controllers, facility management threw in another challenge. If Houston Center could complete June and July free of operational errors, the management team would not only cook and serve them lunch and dinner, they would wash their cars.

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Operational awareness is critical year round, but summer months are frequently problematic in terms of bad weather, distractions and increased incidents. Though safety is always paramount, “deals” happen to even the most diligent. Houston Center employees, however, didn’t flinch. “For the entire months of June, July, and August we were completely error free throughout our 500,000 operations,” says D’Ambrosio.

This meant it was time to pay up, and the center management team, including Andi Ramaker, Janet Landman, Ron Lozano, Pat Martin, Vince Carreras, and facility administrative support



Houston Center car wash

and staff specialists, put their muscle where their mouth was. They cooked hamburgers and hot dogs, provided soft drinks and ice-cream and, true to their word, they washed employees’ cars and Texas-sized trucks. Rose Royce’s song “Car Wash,” from the movie of the same name, provided the background music.

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“Everyone had a great time,” says Rob Reese, support manager. “But it was really about recognizing the work of the air traffic workforce and saying thanks for great performance.”

One controller summed it up by saying, “I was just doing my job, but it’s nice to know that someone notices, appreciates it, and I get free food and a car wash, too. Where else would this happen?”

Houston Center management is well-known for its innovative management techniques. For example, last November they promised controllers that for every day Houston Center went without an error, management would

give to the Combined Federal Campaign. Houston Center employees accepted that challenge and made only one error in 30 days, quickly filling the coffers with a record \$66,159. ✈

Houston Center in Brief

100 days: 500,000 error-free operations

Houston Center controls approximately 276,866 square miles of airspace over Texas, New Mexico, Oklahoma, Louisiana, Arkansas, and the Gulf of Mexico. In fiscal year 2005, Houston handled more than 2 million flights. Their operational errors so far this year are down 47 percent compared to fiscal year 2004.

A Soaring Success

More than a quarter century after learning how to fly, Harlow Voorhees has a hard time planting both feet on terra firma. Yet, you'd be hard pressed to talk to anyone more down-to-earth. An operations inspector with the Fresno Flight Standards District Office, one of Voorhees' responsibilities is flying aircraft. And while many of us seek to draw a distinction between our work and home lives, Voorhees happily blurs the line. When he's not at work, you're likely to find him at the Central California Soaring Club (CCSC), flying a glider or his Cessna.

"I love everything about flying, from the sensory sensations of what you see when you're flying, to the interaction between the pilot and the



Voorhees and Mersino on the day the teen received his private pilot's license.

machine. It's like a kid learning to ride a bicycle," says Voorhees.

He also enjoys meeting and talking with other aviation enthusiasts. One of them is Jacob Mersino. At 16 years old,

A Soaring Success

Mersino became the youngest person to earn his private pilots' license in the history of the CCSC, a flying club where Voorhees has been a member for years. Pilots' licenses can also be earned through certified flying schools.

"I met Jacob when he started taking glider lessons at 14. Matter of fact, I issued his student pilot certificate," says Voorhees with great pride.

Over the next two years, they would see each other from time to time at the club giving Voorhees the chance to keep up with the student's progress. Appropriately enough, having issued the student pilot certificate, Voorhees would be the one to administer Mersino's exam and present him with his license.

"The designated examiner was unavailable, and since Jacob really wanted to get his license on his 16th birthday, I modified my work schedule that week, and came in on Saturday to give him the exam," says Voorhees, whose day job entails pilot certification, inspections, and the occasional accident investigation. "It was so rewarding to be the one to present him with his license. He was so prepared and far exceeded the minimum



Voorhees prepares Mersino's private pilot certificate.

A Soaring Success

requirements. It was very impressive to see someone his age strive for something and reach his goals.”

Vorhees says the qualities displayed by Mersino are essential for aspiring pilots. It takes maturity and a strong desire to undertake the training and hard work that leads to certification . Good hand-eye coordination and good judgment are also needed. He says flying is not for people who plan to do it once in a while. It’s an aptitude that needs to be honed through practice, painstaking attention to detail, and determination.

Voorhees should know. Throughout his years as a pilot of gliders, seaplanes, Cessnas, and a host of other aircraft, he’s taught dozens the intricacies of aviation. He also knows a good instructor when he sees one. He

compliments Harold Gallagher, the man who trained Mersino, on a job well done.

“I started in the San Francisco Bay area in the 70s as a flight instructor, and worked as a check airman for a regional airline for 24 years until ’98, when I joined the FAA,” says Voorhees.

He now hopes his effort will reflect favorably on the agency as a whole. “It was also an opportunity for the FAA to get some good PR, and for the public to know that we are here to serve them,” says Voorhees. “I really think it helped our image in the community.”

With people like Voorhees helping aspiring pilots achieve their dreams, Mersino and others like him need only set the sky as the limit. ✈

Living the Values

Giovanni Carnaroli leads the FAA Office of Management and Budget Exhibit 300 for Strategy & Investment Analysis (AIO-20). But when he leaves the office, Carnaroli is Battalion Chief with the Rockville Volunteer Fire Department in Montgomery County, Md., something he's been doing for about 15 years.

On Sunday September 4, Carnaroli received a call; the New Orleans fire service needed help. All 33 of the city's fire stations were flooded and evacuated. Early the next morning he, and a convoy of about 77 others, left Rockville, Md., for the Crescent City—now a disaster area. This is his story.

Once we were immunized, our convoy hit the road. Escorted by Montgomery County Police SWAT personnel, sixty career and volunteer firefighters in four engines, two trucks, ten ambulances, two command vehicles, a fuel tanker, and a tractor-trailer containing 48 to 72 hours of supplies, we rolled out of town.

Refueling was a large part of the trip. The fire engines, built to be driven only a few miles at a time, have a fuel tank capacity of about 40 to 50 gallons. At five miles per gallon, we had to stop six times on our 1,200-mile trip. You should have seen the faces on those small town residents when we pulled into their towns to refuel, especially with the SWAT team practicing protective detail preparing for possible attacks.

It was tough going, but finally, after more than 24 hours, we reached Meridian, Ms., where the severity



Top: FAA employee and Fire Battalion Chief Giovanni Carnaroli

Bottom: Montgomery County contingent convoy

Living the Values



Top: Trees downed by Hurricane Katrina

Middle: Collapsed buildings from Hurricane Katrina

Bottom: Interstate 10 reduced to boat ramps

of the situation began to sink in. After fueling all the vehicles in case fuel could not be found, which turned out to be the case, we headed south towards the coast.

Everywhere trees were down, as if the state had begun a logging operation along the highway. New Orleans was still inaccessible from the east because of flooding, so we went around Lake Pontchartrain and entered from the west. As we neared the city, we saw portions of railroad tracks under water, miles of downed power lines, collapsed buildings, and no civilian personnel.

After 36 hours, we finally reached our destination, a nursing home in Algiers, La., The residents of the Mary Joseph Little Sisters of the Poor had evacuated. Located on the west bank of the Mississippi River, just across from the Big Easy, the building had a new life as the headquarters of the New Orleans Fire Department.

Personnel worked 24-hour shifts, 6 a.m. to 6 a.m. While on duty, they were assigned to firefighting operation. Off duty, they did administrative tasks such as cooking, cleaning the facility and provisioning supplies. I was assigned to B Platoon.

Firefighting in a city that had no water in its hydrants was difficult at worst, creative at best. Water tankers

Living the Values

dispatched to the Mississippi River would deliver water to the scene. Occasionally we had to draught water from city streets, but the debris and sewage was destructive to the water pumps. One tactic, helicopter water drops widely used in fighting wild land fires, were being used on building fires. Never in my wildest dreams had I imagined that.

In addition to fighting fires, we aided the New Orleans Fire Department in reopening fire stations and gathering data on road conditions. It was not glamorous to wade through floodwaters, but the feeling of helping the city's firefighters regain control of their fire stations was very rewarding.

We were able to open fire stations on Decatur Street (in the French Quarter), Magazine Street (in the affluent Garden District) and Girod Street (downtown). The other 30 fire stations were still immersed in a foot or more of water. On September 18, when the remaining contingent from Montgomery County returned home, another dozen stations had reopened and the New Orleans Fire Department was back on its feet.

We also helped firefighters get to their homes to assess the damage. Some 80 to 90 percent of New Orleans'



**Top: Driving
through the
flooded streets**

**Bottom: Carnaroli
and New Orleans
Fire Department
members**

Living the Values

firefighters may have lost their homes. The devastation was unimaginable, especially for a U.S. city. We have seen the news footage of the parishes surrounding New Orleans resembling Bangladesh after a typhoon, but actually being in the middle of it was surreal.

As we moved along the flooded streets, there was an eerie sense of stillness and quiet, except for the occasional low-flying helicopter, a few lifeless bodies snagged on trees resembling mannequins in some macabre scene, and many dead pets. The only rescue I can be credited with was that of three dogs trapped in a minivan, and who seemed unwilling to move on their own. It was heartbreaking to see so many dead animals, especially dogs that were left chained when their owners fled, knowing they didn't even stand a chance to survive. Luckily, the SPCA had volunteers in the city, and we occasionally cut dogs loose from chains and turned them over for care—not knowing what their future was. I later learned that many dogs were being adopted in other cities, easing my worry that they would be put to sleep. A fellow Rockville volunteer firefighter adopted a stray dog that wandered into the firehouse one day, and fittingly named him "Voodoo".

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We were all too aware of the pollutants, bacteria, and other dangers lurking in the water. After every call and at the end of the day, all of our apparatuses and equipment had to be decontaminated. We also had to scrub ourselves often with antibacterial soap. And although I did not have much to begin with, I decided to shave my head and not worry about hair.

By September 11, water had receded from the city and service was being restored to the fire hydrants. Utility crews had restored electricity to large sections of the city, cleaning crews were removing garbage and debris, and decontamination crews were getting ready to restore hotels and office buildings downtown. A memorial service conducted to remember the victims of September 11, 2001, also honored the FDNY firefighters that came to help. Here were two disasters four years apart that wreaked enormous havoc on this country, and brought out the true helping spirit in our people.

The day culminated with a surprise visit by President George W. Bush, U.S. Coast Guard Vice Admiral Thad Allen, Army Lt. General Russell Honore, and New Orleans Mayor Ray Nagin.



Top:
Decontamination
area

Bottom: Carnaroli
standing in the
deserted streets
of New Orleans

Living the Values

As the situation stabilized, Montgomery County personnel began demobilizing. On the long trip home, I had plenty of time to reflect. It's not often that one has an opportunity to help people in their time of dire need. As I watched the news in the days following Hurricane Katrina's wrath, I felt powerless, much like I did after September 11. And much like I did 15 years ago when I witnessed that fatal car accident that I drew me to the fire and rescue service. I suppose the feeling I get from helping people when they need it most is what is most rewarding. Knowing that I was part of rebuilding the fire service in New Orleans makes me proud. Helping the citizens of New Orleans get their city back, and keeping the tradition of Mardi Gras alive, will be in my heart forever.

I am exhausted, but happy to be home, where the storm surge of Hurricane Exhibit 300 is also receding.

Integrity is the FAA's character, people are our strength. We're happy to have you back too, Giovanni. ✈

Editor's Note:

This article was edited for content and space limitations.

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On October 4, Flight Service employees will transition from government service to working for the contractor, Lockheed Martin. John Schamel, who started his career at Albuquerque Flight Service Station in 1985, shared some of their history. He took on the role of historian around the time of the 75th Anniversary of Flight Service in 1995. His history of the Flight Service group has been incorporated into the training materials at the FAA Academy.

When did the service begin and what was its purpose?

Federal air traffic service began when aviation was in its infancy and pilots needed up-to-the-minute weather conditions. After operating airmail on the East Coast for two years, the Post Office



RadioOperator1940

commissioned the Trans Continental Air Mail Route on August 20, 1920. Seventeen Air Mail Radio Stations along the route obtained the latest weather information and provided it to pilots—the first walk-in weather reporting—and it's been our primary mission for 85 years.

As aviation technology evolved, our service grew and changed, from service for airmail pilots to airlines, from hardy

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barnstormers to thousands of private pilots. Filing and handling flight plans and movement messages, providing radio communications, maintaining aeronautical information (NOTAMs), monitoring NAVAIDS, conducting search and rescue missions, all were added to station duties during the 1920s and 1930s. In 1961 flight service controllers were certified by the Weather Bureau. We did it so well that the National Weather Service (which replaced the Weather Bureau) finally got out of the pilot briefing business in 1995. We're the last federal civilian organization to provide pilot weather briefings.

What have been the biggest changes to the service in the past 30 years?

I'd have to say the biggest change was in the technology. Western Union built the very first federal communications system dedicated solely to the air traffic service in 1928. Its primary task was sharing weather observations and forecasts. By 1930, system capacity doubled so that it could handle flight plans, flight movement messages, and administrative traffic. That



Red_Bluff_Calif Ops 1969

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Teletype system stayed in operation for slightly more than 50 years.

In the early 1970s, as a part of the plan to overhaul flight service, the system was automated with computers. Unfortunately, those automation plans had their flaws. The systems were unable to keep pace with changes in computer technology, and that put flight service in a bad way. We've gone from using an obsolete Teletype system to using an obsolete computer system.

Another milestone was in 1973 when stations were consolidated. From a high of almost 400, flight service in the U.S. (excluding Alaska) now has only 58 stations. Pilots had been used to a network of stations along their routes. As the system consolidated between 1984 and 1998 most states ended up with only one 'super' station, and

pilots lost the opportunity to meet the controllers face-to-face.

Sadly, another big change was the slow decline of the service. Budget cuts delayed and cancelled automation upgrades. They also limited the hiring of new controllers, reduced training opportunities, and cut staff.

What will you miss the most beside the camaraderie?

I'll miss being a public servant; I always took pride in working for our nation's citizens.

What was the highlight of your career?

Being able to serve our customers and represent the FAA at the Centennial of Powered Flight at Kitty Hawk in 2003. I was able to meet quite a few famous pilots. I even provided a weather briefing to the Administrator's pilot on December 17.

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For a long-term highlight, it was my time as an instructor at the FAA Academy.

What's been the hardest part of the A-76 process and the transition?

Gads, where do I start? For a while it was the uncertainty, then the lack of information, then the vague answers. But mostly it was the underlying current of stress. Many coworkers had a hard time dealing with it. Often it's hard to see the big picture of cost savings, improved service and government efficiency when you've been a dedicated employee for many years. It felt like the rug had just been pulled out from under us.

What are some other "lessons learned" that could help others in the FAA or other government agencies regarding A-76?

Brush up on your stress management skills and be prepared to ride a roller coaster of

emotions and feelings. Get your resume up to date and don't make any major financial commitments. You have to be prepared to handle the stress, frustration, and uncertainty for a long time.

Where do you go from here?

My last day of federal service as a flight service controller is October 3. My first day as a Lockheed Martin flight service controller is October 4. Although I'll have a change in pay and benefits, I get to do the same job at the same place. And I'll get in "on the ground floor" of the next chapter of flight service history.

Any last words for FAA?

Thanks for the opportunities and the memories. ✈


Your Two Cents

As the fallout from Hurricane Katrina continues, look for Focus FAA to follow up with an article on the lessons we learned in responding to the crisis. It goes without saying that the FAA clearly had its act together before, during and after the storm. But there's always room for improvement, and that's what makes this agency one of the best in the federal government — it can never rest on its laurels and it never does.

We're interested in any stories from employees who experienced the storm first-hand, or who helped out during the FAA's response.

In the meantime, if you can spare a thought and a dime for our employees who suffered loss during the storm, take a look below at the various sites that have been established to help.

KATRINA DISASTER RESPONSE

- Help for Affected FAA Employees
- Financial Help Now Available for Affected Employees
- Special 24-hour Toll Free Hotline — 1-866-900-3850
(Only for employees directly affected by Hurricane Katrina)
- OPM Hurricane Katrina Information Resource
- Give through FAA's Combined Federal Campaign (CFC)
- Federal Employee Education & Assistance Fund
- FAA Employee Emergency Relief Fund
- Donate and Volunteer 



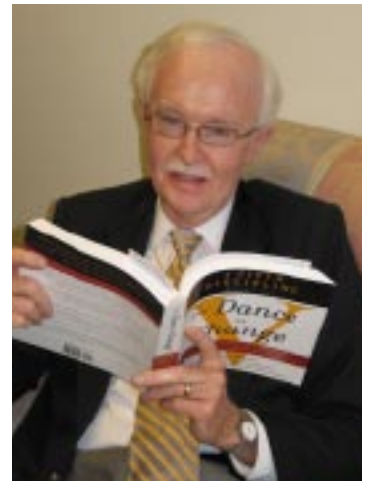
Now This

WHOSE BILL OF RIGHTS?

Legislation enacted last year designating September 17 each year as Constitution Day has unleashed a flood of handouts, brochures, posters, and websites urging citizens to learn more about the Constitution. To some, it may seem like a waste of money.

But, I'll bet if there were a national exam today on the Constitution, the passing rate would be low. I didn't realize how much I didn't know about the Constitution until I bought a copy of *THE WORDS WE LIVE BY, Your Annotated Guide to the Constitution* by Linda R. Monk. It was an eye-opener — and humbling.

Let's start with the Bill of Rights, shorthand for the first ten amendments to the Constitution that were ratified in 1791, only a few years after the original document was adopted. The framers looked on the Constitution as its own bill of rights and didn't see any reason to append a separate Bill of Rights. People outside the convention



Gerald E. Lavey

Now This

hall took a decidedly different view, and as George Washington predicted, the American people began the process of amending the Constitution almost as soon as its ink dried.

These ten amendments literally play themselves out in front of us every day. Most, if not all, the hot button political issues being debated in the newspapers, on television, and over the radio are Bill of Rights' issues. The recent hearings for the confirmation of Judge Roberts to be Chief Justice to the Supreme were literally a prolonged discussion and debate on that subject.

The Bill of Rights has shaped this country and its people from the beginning. It's what gives this country its character and its strength — and its primary appeal to millions of people around the world. Even though it took us a long time to guarantee the Bill of Rights for all our citizens, we

generally go to extraordinary lengths to protect those rights. Or at least we should.

Virtually everyone in this country supports the Bill of Rights in theory, but occasionally you see polls where respondents seem to be willing to abridge the Bill of Rights for others on issues that nudge them outside their comfort zones, away from their own deeply held political or belief systems. However, the whole point of the Bill of Rights is that it's not just about you or me — it's about all of us. And if it's not there for all of us, it might not be there for any of us. ✈

Gerald E. Lavey
Deputy Assistant Administrator for
Internal Communications

AOA HIGHLIGHTS

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Note: Please keep in mind that links to some outside publications mentioned in AOA Highlights work for only a few days and after that many publications no longer provide free access.

Recovering From Rita:

Even though the storm spared the Gulf region the worst, it still wreaked its share of havoc. Some FAA employees still unaccounted for.

Taking Care of Others and One Another:

San Antonio controllers fill in for Beaumont controllers so they could attend to their families and flee the threatened city.

New Early Dispute Resolution Center Opens:

Center designed to address area where we got low

marks in last Employee Attitude Survey.

New-Look Personnel and Payroll System:

Oct. 16, FAA will migrate to the Interior's FPPS system. It'll be different and look different than current system.

Flight Plan Progress thru August:

Two performance targets in the red; two in the yellow. Revised plan for 2006 to be rolled out in late October, early November.

Latest on Labor Management Negotiations:

See the employee site for the latest developments in negotiations between FAA and [NATCA](#) and [PASS](#).

Employees in FOCUS:

Capstone's John Hallinan to retire. Doug Ledet,

Flight Standards inspector, dies in plane crash.

The Last Word:

Two book recommendations and some help in perfecting the blame game.

Recovering from Rita:

As you have seen repeatedly on your television screens, Hurricane Rita came ashore bringing high winds, torrential rains, and tornadoes. The good news is the hurricane wasn't as bad as feared. The bad news is it still did a whole lot of damage. Just ask folks in Lake Charles and Beaumont – and those

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who used to live in the 9th ward of New Orleans.

As of this writing, the morning of September 26, there are still a few employees unaccounted for. This is not surprising at this early juncture. Lots of employees left the area to evacuate their families and may be having difficulties with telecommunications or too busy relocating their families to think about it. As for facilities, the Lake Charles and Beaumont air traffic control facilities were badly hit and open only for VFR emergency operations.

Meantime, you will find links to other sources of help or information under "[Hurricane](#)

[Disaster Response](#)" on the employee site.

Taking Care of Others and One Another:

The following story by Focus FAA editor Jim Tise is a wonderfully human tale of FAA people going that extra mile to do their jobs in the face of adversity and continuing to look out for one another in the process. The situation involves employees and managers of the Beaumont and San Antonio air traffic control towers as FAA braced for Rita's onslaught late last week.

"FAA will likely evacuate the Beaumont (Texas) Air Traffic Control Tower today [Friday, September 23] after extending operations for more

than a day to help the military evacuate citizens. Originally scheduled to close yesterday at noon, a skeleton crew of FAA volunteers agreed to staff the tower until 5 p.m. at the request of the military, which planned to airlift about 1,000 people out of the area.

"By 5 p.m., however, it became clear thousands more needed evacuating, including many elderly, infirmed and sick people. Once again, the Beaumont crew — Air Traffic Manager James Wilson, Supervisor Robert Guyton, and Controllers Kim Hanley (also the NATCA facility representative) and Anthony Lisauckis — agreed to work until 10

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p.m., despite the fact they all had families to evacuate.

“At 10 p.m., the military again requested an extension of operating hours to this morning. Realizing the controllers had been working overtime and had to tend to their personal lives, FAA officials turned to San Antonio, where Operations Manager Dennis Green had recruited volunteers for emergency duty. Green and Controllers John Reagan, William Cocanour and Brad Guilmino flew to Beaumont on one hour’s notice to relieve the controllers at 1 a.m. today. By the time they left, the Beaumont crew had helped the military airlift out as many as 4,000-5,000 people.

“‘They felt a sense of commitment,’ said Mark Reeves, acting staff manager for central terminal operations, of the Beaumont crew. ‘They could see the people being evacuated. They wanted to help.’ The crew from San Antonio is expected to be airlifted out on the last military flight from Beaumont today.”

New Early Dispute Resolution Center Opens:

Monday, September 26, the Early Dispute Resolution Center at FAA headquarters officially opened for business. The Administrator announced earlier this year she would be establishing an Early Dispute Resolution Center at FAA headquarters and that Chuck Hedges

would head it. This was in response to the low marks we got on the Employee Attitude Survey in the area of conflict management and resolution. The early dispute resolution option was the result of months of effort by a team of senior executives who examined best practices in government and industry.

We recently had a chance to [sit down with Chuck to discuss the center.](#)

New-Look Personnel and Payroll System:

On Oct. 16, FAA will migrate to the Department of Interior’s Federal Personnel and Payroll System (FPPS), the last of the DOT modal administrations

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to transition to the new service provider. A [broadcast message](#) was recently sent to all employees to alert them to what they can expect to see when they receive their first Leave and Earnings Statement under the new system. In a word, it will be different in format and experience.

Flight Plan Progress thru August:

On Sept. 15, the Administrator and her executive management team met for the monthly review of the [FAA Flight Plan](#). The results are as of the end of August. Of the 31 performance targets, two are in the “red” category and two in the “yellow.” In the red are general aviation

fatal accidents and Alaska accidents. Yellow targets include operational errors and oceanic en-route change requests. (Even though the performance target for Category A and B operational errors was in the “yellow” for the latest reporting period, it will be “red” by fiscal year’s end because September put us over the not-to-exceed limit for the year.)

Latest on Labor Management Negotiations:

See the employee site for the latest developments in negotiations between FAA and [NATCA](#) and [PASS](#).

Employees in Focus:

- **John Hallinan**, program manager for the **Capstone program**, is retiring at the end of the

month. The [Capstone demonstration program](#) has been very successful and much of the credit goes to him. He was not only its titular head; he was its driving force. There was a lot of early skepticism about the program, but John doggedly worked with the aviation community in Alaska and the folks here in Washington and made it happen. He embodies so much of what I like about the can-do spirit of our FAA people in Alaska. John can cut through bureaucracy like a hot knife through butter. Whenever he came to town, I always told him: John, don’t stay in town too long. You’ll begin thinking like us and that will slow you down.

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- Regrettably, we lost one of our Flight Standards inspectors recently when the aircraft he and another pilot were flying crashed into the ocean near Catalina Island in California. **The inspector's name was Doug Ledet, 58, an inspector with the Riverside FSDO.** Ledet served as a Green Beret during the Vietnam War, then spent time as a pilot with TWA. He later started his own charter flight business and then two years ago he took a job with FAA. "He loved having an official job, his sister said. "'It was such a dream come true," she said. "He was so proud of his (FAA) badge. I don't know where his badge is, but it's one thing I want."

The Last Word:

I'm in the midst of a couple of books that are worth recommending. **FREAKONOMICS**, at the top of the Washington Post's non-fiction bestseller list, was recommended by a couple of friends, so I picked it up over the weekend. Not sure I like it as much as the breathless blurbs and reviews would have me like it, but it does make one think. And anything that accomplishes that is well worth pursuing. If nothing else it turns conventional wisdom and generally accepted assumptions on their head. More on this later.

Another book just about finished is **QUEEN NOOR**, written by the queen herself, widow

of King Hussein of Jordan. Long before she became Queen Noor, Lisa Halaby, daughter of Najeib Halaby, former FAA Administrator under President Kennedy, used to visit FAA, even after her father was no longer FAA Administrator. If memory serves me right, I met her a couple of times in the mid-70's. Her memoir is very readable and quite interesting, not only because of the light it sheds on her relationship to Hussein and the challenge of a young American woman adapting to a whole new society and way of life, but for the different perspective she provides on the Middle East.

AOA HIGHLIGHTS

And, finally, on Sept. 16 The Wall Street Journal had an interesting article on the human tendency, “dating back a million years or more,” to point the finger of blame at others. Observes Ohio University professor Mark Alicke, “the human impulse to blame grows out of the evolutionary need to avert harm.” He notes that the Bible is replete with examples of finger pointing, with Adam and Eve being the earliest and most notable example. Alicke says our “blame culture is rooted in both nature and nurture,” observing that “if we stub a toe on a chair, we’ll kick it and curse at it, even though

we know it’s irrational to blame inanimate objects.” Cathryn Bond Doyle, a New Jersey communications counselor, says often we blame because we lack the skills to problem-solve. “Blame is about the past, and about words. Problem-solving focuses on the future and is about actions.” She wisely observes, “it’s more productive to evaluate and recalibrate than to mercilessly judge someone’s past actions, or to demonize them.”

There’s even a [blame site](#) where “you can buy a “calibrated blame-shifting device” for \$2.95. It’s a giant foam hand with the words

‘It’s your fault!’ on the pointer finger. The tongue-in-cheek site features such comforting words to live by as: “You have everyone but yourself to blame.” And, “it’s not you, it’s the printer.” ✈

Gerald E. Lavey
Deputy Assistant
Administrator for Internal
Communications

First Air Traffic Control Conversation

"O.K. Urbil, you fly the plane...and I'll stand on the hill and point in the direction you should go."



Wright Brothers Invent Air Traffic Control